

or isofunctional variants thereof obtained by substitution, insertion or deletion of one or more nucleotides,

and

(b) a transactivator construct coding for a fusion protein comprising IRF-1 and an the estrogen receptor.

2. (Currently Amended) An Eexpression vector(s) comprising a the promoter construct and ~~or the~~ transactivator construct ~~according to~~ of claim 1.

3. (Currently Amended) A Mmammalian cells transfected or transformed with ~~an~~ the expression vector(s) ~~according to~~ of claim 2.

4. (Currently Amended) A Process for inducible high-level mammalian gene expression with the option of cell growth control comprising the steps of:

(a) transfecting or transforming mammalian cells with ~~an the~~ expression vector ~~or expression vectors, respectively, according to~~ of claim 2;

(b) culturing said mammalian cells, ~~or transfected or transformed mammalian cells according to the expression vector(s) of claim 2~~ in a suitable medium; and,

(c) optionally, controlling the growth of said mammalian cells by varying the concentration and the duration of exposure to estradiol in the medium.

5. (New) The promoter-transactivator system of claim 1, wherein the promoter construct and the transactivator construct are incorporated in a single expression vector.

6. (New) The promoter-transactivator system of claim 1, wherein the promoter construct and the transactivator construct are incorporated in separate expression vectors.

7. (New) An expression vector comprising the promoter construct of claim 1.

8. (New) An expression vector comprising the transactivator construct of claim 1.

9. (New) A mammalian cell transfected or transformed with the expression vector of claim 2.

10. (New) A mammalian cell transfected or transformed with the expression vector of claims 5.

11. (New) A mammalian cell transfected or transformed with the expression vector of claim 6.

12. (New) A process for inducible high-level mammalian gene expression with the option of cell growth control comprising the steps of:

- (a) transfecting or transforming mammalian cells with the expression vector of claim 7;
- (b) culturing said mammalian cells in a suitable medium; and,
- (c) optionally, controlling the growth of said mammalian cells by varying the concentration and the duration of exposure to estradiol in the medium.

13. (New) A process for inducible high-level mammalian gene expression with the option of cell growth control comprising the steps of:

- (a) transfecting or transforming mammalian cells with the expression vector of claim 8;
- (b) culturing said mammalian cells in a suitable medium; and,
- (c) optionally, controlling the growth of said mammalian cells by varying the concentration and the duration of exposure to estradiol in the medium.